

## NEWS RELEASE

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### One year in CASC inputs into improvements on Selling Animals as Pets licensing guidance

The Companion Animal Sector Council (CASC) has submitted its views on the Selling Animals as Pets guidance as part of a first-year review announced by Defra.

The Animal Activities licensing regime for England replaced the old pet shop inspections, extending its remit to cover more businesses involved with animals.

The multi-disciplinary CASC working group has submitted over 100 suggestions as part of its review based on feedback from businesses, welfare organisations, veterinary bodies, specialist hobby groups and enforcement organisations. These include:

- Highlighting problems with the business test criteria which helps local authorities decide who needs to be licensed.
- Developing the housing recommendations to aid interpretation to improve consistency together with creating more species relevance.
- Questioning the type of training recognised by the guidance, particularly those species-specific training programmes which do not meet Level 3 qualification.
- Improving clarity of the fee setting criteria.
- Drafting improvements to clarify areas of confusion.
- Reducing administration burden on businesses where this can be achieved without compromising welfare.

“The Animal Activities Licensing Selling Animals as Pets guidance has now been in place for over a year and we’ve had plenty of feedback from the businesses at the sharp end about what it’s like for inspectors to visit, and from inspectors about what it’s like to carry out the inspections” explained CASC Chair Michael Stanford.

“We’ve made suggested amendments that we believe stay true to the spirit of ensuring animal welfare within the inspection process while also being pragmatic about how the guidance can be implemented within a business setting.

“The guidance aimed to cover more enterprises that benefited commercially from selling pets, which we wholeheartedly support, but our members report ongoing confusion about the business test criteria leading to a lottery about which smaller enterprises are covered by different Local Authorities. This is an important issue requiring resolution as if someone is making money from selling animals, they should face the same rigour and inspection as ‘bricks and mortar’ pet shops and wholesalers, which invest significantly to ensure they meet high standards.”

“We will be tasking working groups of relevant sector experts to address further issues in far more detail during 2021, with a view to provide further input for consideration ready for the first review of the legislations statutory instrument in 2022.”

CASC brings together a wide range of representative voices from the trade and keeping communities, enforcement, charities, veterinary bodies and several expert disciplines and is split into a number of working groups around pet animal species (other than cats, dogs and horses). Its

role is to give feedback and advice to the Government on related companion animal issues to feed into decision making by departments.

As part of the review CASC also submitted its views on the Guidance notes for conditions for keeping or training animals for exhibition.

The recommendations have now been submitted to DEFRA for their consideration.